

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 4, 6-18, 20, and 22-31 are pending in the present application. By this amendment, claims 1-2, 4, 6-7, 9, 11, 16, 18, 20, 22-23, 25, and 27 are amended. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present claims in view of the following remarks.

Entry of the above amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 (a) in that the above Amendment (1) places the claims in condition for allowance; (2) places the claims in better condition for consideration on appeal, if necessary; (3) does not raise any new issues; and (4) does not add new claims without canceling a corresponding number of claims. For the reasons given above, entry of the above amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 is respectfully requested.

I. Record of Telephone Conference with Examiners Knowlin and Matar

Examiners Knowlin and Matar spoke with attorneys of record Christopher Leonard and Jodi Hartman on January 6, 2004, regarding the final Office Action received on November 7, 2003. The interview covered the rejection of claims 1 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Larson in view of Fitser. The undersigned and Mr. Leonard proposed an amendment to claim 1, similar to the amendment in the present response, and noted that combined teachings of Larson and Fitser does not teach or suggest a method for providing unified messaging as recited in claim 1 because both Larson and Fitser fail to teach or suggest extracting a participant communication address in accordance with the conference logistics, and after extracting the participant communication address, if the participant profile data includes a current communication address that differs from the participant communication address, then updating the extracted participant communication address with the current communication address in accordance with the participant profile data. The Examiners noted that the prior art would likely be overcome if the “address” elements of claim 1 were amended to more clearly reference communication addresses, and if claim 1 was amended to distinguish between the “participant communication address” element and the “current communication address” element. Such amendments have been made in the present

response. The Examiner also noted that claim 16 will be treated comparable to claim 1 if claim 16 is amended to include language similar to claim 1 as amended.

II. Prior Art Rejections

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 5,907,324 to Larson et al. (hereinafter "Larson") in view of United States Patent No. 5,631,904 to Fitser et al. (hereinafter "Fitser"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As amended, claim 1 recites that a method of automatically establishing a conference comprises extracting a participant communication address in accordance with the conference logistics, and after extracting the participant communication address, if the participant profile data includes a current communication address that differs from the participant communication address, then updating the extracted participant communication address with the current communication address in accordance with the participant profile data.

Larson does not teach or suggest a method of automatically establishing a conference as recited by claim 1. On the contrary, Larson teaches a method of saving, retrieving, and establishing a plurality of conference parameters that establishes a conference environment by opening the identified persistent conference object and reading all of the relevant conference parameters; locating the participants' telephone numbers; and calling each of the participants, without suggesting that after the participants' telephone numbers are located, updating the participants' telephone numbers with current telephone numbers if the participants' profiles include current telephone numbers that differ from the participants' telephone numbers.

Larson also teaches that whenever a change in one of the conference parameters occurs, a conference manager detects the change and stores the updated information into the persistent conference object. However, this is not analogous to the method of claim 1 because Larson fails to teach or suggest that once the participants' telephone numbers are located in order to establish a conference, the telephone numbers are updated with current telephone numbers included in the participants' profiles. Therefore, Larson does not

teach or suggest a method of automatically establishing a conference as recited by claim 1.

The Office Action relies on the teaching of Fitser to attempt to cure the deficiencies of Larson. However, like Larson, Fitser does not teach or suggest a method of automatically establishing a conference as recited by claim 1. In contrast, Fitser teaches a method for automatically establishing a conference call to a preselected list of participants by selecting a particular one of a subscriber's records based on an entered group identifier; causing bridge hardware to originate calls to each of the destinations specified in the record; and bridging each of the called participants into the conference call with the subscriber, without suggesting that after one of the subscriber's records is selected, updating the participants' telephone numbers with current telephone numbers if the selected subscriber's record includes current telephone numbers that differ from the participants' telephone numbers. Thus, Fitser fails to teach or suggest a method of automatically establishing a conference as recited by claim 1.

For at least the reasons above, Applicants respectfully submit that the combined teachings of Larson and Fitser fail to make obvious Applicants' claimed invention as embodied in independent claim 1. Since claims 2, 4, and 6-15 depend from independent claim 1 and recite additional features, Applicants submit that the combined teachings of Larson and Fitser fail to make obvious Applicants' claimed invention as embodied in claims 2, 4, and 6-15. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

As amended, claim 16 recites that a method of automatically establishing a conference comprises extracting a participant communication address in accordance with the conference logistics, and after extracting the participant communication address, if the participant profile data includes a current communication address that differs from the participant communication address, then updating the extracted participant communication address with the current communication address in accordance with the participant profile data.

Larson does not teach or suggest a method of automatically establishing a conference as recited by claim 16. In contrast, as discussed above, Larson teaches a method of saving, retrieving, and establishing a plurality of conference parameters that establishes a conference environment by locating the participants' telephone numbers and

calling each of the participants, without suggesting that after the participants' telephone numbers are located, updating the participants' telephone numbers with current telephone numbers if the participants' profiles include current telephone numbers that differ from the participants' telephone numbers. Also, Larson teaches that whenever a change in one of the conference parameters occurs, a conference manager detects the change and stores the updated information into the persistent conference object. However, this is not analogous to the method of claim 16 because Larson fails to teach or suggest that once the participants' telephone numbers are located to establish a conference, the telephone numbers are updated with current telephone numbers included in the participants' profiles. Therefore, Larson does not teach or suggest a method of automatically establishing a conference as recited by claim 16.

The Office Action relies on the teaching of Fitser to attempt to cure the deficiencies of Larson. However, like Larson, Fitser does not teach or suggest a method of automatically establishing a conference as recited by claim 16. In contrast, Fitser teaches a method for automatically establishing a conference call to a preselected list of participants by selecting a particular one of a subscriber's records based on an entered group identifier; causing bridge hardware to originate calls to each of the destinations specified in the record; and bridging each of the called participants into the conference call with the subscriber. This is not analogous with the method of claim 16 because Fitser fails to teach or suggest that after one of the subscriber's records is selected, updating the participants' telephone numbers with current telephone numbers if the selected subscriber's record includes current telephone numbers that differ from the participants' telephone numbers. Thus, Fitser fails to teach or suggest a method of automatically establishing a conference as recited by claim 16.

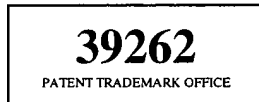
For at least the reasons above, Applicants respectfully submit that the combined teachings of Larson and Fitser fail to make obvious Applicants' claimed invention as embodied in independent claim 16. Since claims 17-18, 20, and 22-31 depend from independent claim 16 and recite additional features, Applicants submit that the combined teachings of Larson and Fitser fail to make obvious Applicants' claimed invention as embodied in claims 17-18, 20, and 22-31. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

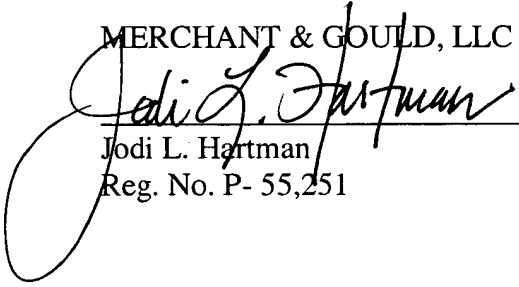
For at least these reasons, Applicants assert that the pending claims 1-2, 4, 6-18, 20, and 22-31 are in condition for allowance. The Applicants further assert that this response addresses each and every point of the final Office Action, and respectfully request that the Examiner pass this application with claims 1-2, 4, 6-18, 20, and 22-31 to allowance. Should the Examiner feel that a telephone interview with Applicants' attorney would further advance the case, please contact the undersigned at 404.954.5042.

Respectfully submitted,

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